

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 NIC-01 OMB-01

CU-04 DRC-01 /170 W

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R 181700Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0964

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC

CINCEUR

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5219

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD; CINCPAC & CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, NILI, IN, AF, BG, IR, IZ, SN, ID, AS

SUBJECT: INDIAN MILITARY INCREASES REGIONAL CONTACTS

SUMMARY: IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST SIX
EXCHANGES OF VISITS BETWEEN INDIAN MILITARY AND DEFENSE
OFFICIALS AND THEIR FOREIGN COUNTERPARTS. SOME OF THEM ARE
ACCOUNTED FOR BY STRICTLY BILATERAL CONCERNS SUCH AS MILITARY
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TRAINING. MILITARY CONTACTS WITH COUNTRES OF THE REGION

ALSO LESSEN THE IMPRESSION OF OVERLY CLOSE INDIAN ATTACHMENT TO THE SOVIET MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, AND MAY SERVE THE SAME END FOR COUNTRIES SUCH AS AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ. AS SUBCONTINENTAL TENSIONS GRADUALLY LESSEN, INDIAN MILITARY MEN MAY ALSO SEE A MUCH-EXPANDED SCOPE FOR FRIENDLY TIES WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. ACTION REQUESTED: FURTHER INFORMATION FROM ADDRESSEE POSTS ABOUT THE VISITS SUMMARIZED BELOW AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENT EXCHANGES OF VISITS BY MILITARY AND DEFENSE OFFICIALS BEGAN WITH THE TRIP OF KABUL MARCH 4-16 OF ARMY DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GEN. S.L. MENEZES AND IAF DEPUTY CHIEF AIR MARSHAL DASTUR. THEY WERE JOINED ON MARCH 11 BY DEFENSE MINISTRY SECRETARY GOVIND NARIAN. AS REPORTED IN KABUL 1723, THE DELEGATION WAS GIVEN A DINNER BY PRESIDENT DAOUD, AN HONOR PREVIOUSLY ACCORDED ONLY A SOVIET MILITARY DELEGATION. THE MAJOR SUBJECT DISCUSSED WAS AIR FORCE AND OTHER MILITARY TRAINING FOR AFGHANIS IN INDIA, AND PROJECT WHICH WOULD GIVE AFGHANISTAN AN ALTERNATIVE TO DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS. THERE IS NO INDICATION IN NEW DELHI THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT IS AT HAND.

2. INDIAN ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF G.G. GEWOOR VISITED IRAQ MARCH 16-23 AT THE INVITATION OF THE IRAQI CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF. SCANTY PRESS REPORTS HERE ONLY INDICATED THAT HE HAD A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BAKR. IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN VISITED INDIA MARCH 25-28, CALLING ON DEFENSE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RA WHILE IN NEW DELHI. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE STRESSED IRAN'S SUPPORT FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT.

3. AIR CHIEF MARCHAL O.P. MEHRA, AIR CHIEF OF STAFF, VISITED DACCA MARCH 20-25. IT IS PRESUMED THAT EITHER AIR FORCE TRAINING OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE BANGLADESH AIR FORCE WAS DISCUSSED, BUT NO DETAILS ARE YET AVAILABLE HERE.

4. THE COMMANDER OF THE IRANIAN NAVY, VICE ADMIRAL R.A. ATTAI, VISITED INDIA MARCH 27 TO APRIL 6. ASIDE FROM ROUTINE TOURISM AND VISITS TO NAVAL FACILITIES, HE MET WITH PLANNING MINISTER D.P. DHAR AND APPARENTLY WITH DEFENSE MINISTER ATTAL. ONCE ATTAI ARRIVED, PRESS COVERAGE WAS NIL. IN PRIVATE CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCUSSIONS ATTAI REPORTEDLY SHOWED CONSIDERABLE IRRITATION WITH QUESTIONS POSED BY HIS HOST, ADMIRAL ATTAI DID NOT SEE THE JUST-

IFICATION FOR IRAN'S ARMS BUILD-UP. THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN OR POSSIBLE JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES (WHICH THE SHAH HAS RAISED IN THE PAST) WERE DISCUSSED. THE FACT THAT THE

VISIT TOOK PLACE AT ALL IS YET ANOTHER INDICATION OF IMPROVING INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS (A FURTHER SYMBOL OF WHICH IS THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT DECISION LAST WEEK TO EXPEL ANTI-SHAH IRANIAN STUDENTS).

5. SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES MARITIME COMMAND CHIEF COL. JANES AERIA VISITED INDIA MARCH 17 TO APRIL 11, DURING WHICH TIME FOUR GUNBOATS CALLED AT SOUTH INDIAN PORTS AND CARRIED OUT JOINT EXERCISES WITH UNITS OF THE INDIAN NAVY. A SINGAPORE HIGH COMMISSION OFFICIAL INADVERTENTLY REVEALED THAT THE VISIT HAD COME AS A RESPONSE TO AN INDIAN REQUEST, ONE OF SEVERAL APPROACHES MADE TO INDIAN OCEAN LITTORAL STATES ASKING FOR MILITARY VISITS TO DISCUSS A COORDINATED SERIES OF PROTESTS AGAINST US PLANS TO EXPAND THE GIEGO GARCIA FACILITY. THE SAME SOURCE SAID A REQUEST HAD GONE TO THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT, BUT IT HAD DECIDED NOT TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE UNTIL THE QUESTION OF THE 195 PAKISTANI POWS WAS RESOLVED. (THIS OBSTACLE WAS REMOVED ON APRIL 9.)

6. THE ABOVE REPORT WAS PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED BY A NEWS ITEM OF APRIL 14 STATING THAT INDONESIAN MINISTER FOR DEFENSE AND COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES GEN. MARADEN PANGGABEAN HAD NOW ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM DEFENSE MINISTER RAM TO VISIT INDIA. THE INDONESIAN CHARGE TOLD AN EMBOFF APRIL 16 THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THE VISIT, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT IT HAS NOT YET FORMALLY BEEN SCHEDULED.

8. WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AUSTRALIA'S DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IS EXPECTED TO VISIT NEW DELHI. NO INFORMATION IS YET AVAILABLE AS TO THE AGENDA FOR THE VISIT.

8.COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SOME OF THESE VISITS CENTER AROUND BI-CONFIDENT
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, MILITARY VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NEWDE05219
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740090-1086
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740433/aaaabddx.tel
Line Count: 144
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 26 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 JUN 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN MILITARY INCREASES REGIONAL CONTACTS SUMMARY: IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST SIX
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MILI, IN, AF, BG, IR, IZ, SN, ID, AS, (MENEZES, S L), (GEWOOR, G G)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005